

ABRAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT, 1895.

ASHTON,

February 17th, 1896.

To the Chairman and Members of the Abram Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you my Annual Report for the 20th time, together with Tables A and B of the Local Government Board, and also Table C of the County Council.

The *General Death Rate*, as calculated upon a population of 4694, as estimated to the middle of the year, is 20·8 per 1000 as compared to 17·3 in 1894, 23·5 in 1893, and against a mean of 21·0 for the decade 1885-1894.

The *Zymotic Death Rate* is 4·2 per 1000, against 1·08 in 1894, 6·0 in 1893, and 3·5 for the above decade. Both rates are in advance through a slight increase on the average of deaths from Scarlatina, Measles, and Whooping Cough, and a large mortality of infants from various causes; and

The *Infantile Death Rate* is consequently up again, being 192 per 1000, against 143 in 1894, 176 in 1893, and a mean of 159 for the previous decade. From the following table it will be seen how influential the infantile mortality has been upon the rates.

	1 Month and under.	From 1 Month to 1 Year.	Total.
Respiratory Diseases	4	12	16
Gastro Enteritis	2	8	10
Wasting Diseases of Infancy.....	6	2	8
Convulsive do.	2	—	2
	14	22	36
Zymotic: Scarlatina	—	2	2
Whooping Cough	—	1	1
	14	25	39

Fourteen people—seven of each sex—died over 60, whose united ages were 971, or equal to 69·4 years of an average. Four deaths were uncertified, and two deaths occurred within the area of persons not belonging thereto. One from Heart Disease, and one from drowning. Five inquests were held in connection with accidental deaths, of which, one was referred to suffocation, one run over, one from a fall, one drowned, and one in the mine.

The *Birth Rate* was 43·2 per 1000, against 39·3 in 1894, 46·8 in 1893 (highest record), and a mean of 43·9 for decade.

<i>Births</i>	Males 114;	Females 89;	Total 203
<i>Deaths</i>	„ 57;	„ 43;	„ 100
	<u>57</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>103</u> of a

net increment, deducting the two deaths of outsiders=105, which brings the estimated population to 1st January, 1896, to 4747.

Twelve months ago, the number of houses was said to be approaching a thousand. With the additional new property, now, I should consider, from the occupants of them that this population is much below the true one, and, of course, it has a *material bearing on the death rates*.

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND ITS MORTALITY SINCE ADOPTION OF ACT.

<i>Name on Schedule.</i>						MORTALITY.				
	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895
Scarlatina	20	74	13	10	52	1	5	2	0	5
Erysipelas.....	3	4	6	3	8	—	—	—	—	—
Membr. Croup	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	—
Diphtheria	—	5	—	2	1	—	—	—	1	—
FEVERS {	Typhoid	1	3	5	2	8	—	1	3	—
	Continued.....	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	1	—
	Puerperal	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—
	<u>28</u>	<u>88</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
<i>Not Scheduled—</i>										
Measles ..	...	...	...	...	...	6	—	15	—	6
Whooping Cough...	...	...	...	...	...	—	5	4	2	8
Diarrhoea ...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—	3	3	1
	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>20</u>					

Table A shews summary of deaths at subjoined ages to be as follows:—Deaths under 1 year, 39; one and under five, 28; total under five, 67; five to fifteen, 7; fifteen to twenty-five, 1; twenty-five to sixty, 11; sixty and upwards 14; total over five, 33.

Analysis of Causes of Mortality.—Scarlatina 5 (four under and 5 over 5); Measles 6 (all under 5); Whooping Cough 8, (all under 5); Diarrhoea 1 (under 5); Rheumatic Fever 1 (over 5); Phthisis 4 (2 under 2 over 5); Respiratory Diseases 24 (16 under and 8 over 5); Heart Disease 4 (over 5); Injuries 5 (3 under 2 over 5); various other non-classified 42 (27 under and 15 over 5); Total, 67 under and 33 over 5, minus 2 over 5 of outsiders.—Gross 98.

Sickness during the Year.—Scarlatina, this infantile eruptive fever has been endemic amongst us for years. Its incidence and order of notification is briefly obtained in a tabular form thus:—

MONTH.	WARRINGTON ROAD.
Jan.	No. 77, Warrington Road
Feb.	„ 67, Warrington Road
June	„ 87, Warrington Road
Aug.	„ 516, Warrington Road
„	„ 247, Warrington Road (3 cases).
Sept.	„ 306, Warrington Road
Oct.	„ 206, Warrington Road
Nov.	„ 186, Warrington Road
Dec.	„ 56, Warrington Road (4 cases).
	Total—9 houses; 14 cases.

MONTH.	PLANK LANE.
Feb.	No. 16, Plank Lane
July	„ 26, Plank Lane
Aug.	„ 110, Plank Lane
„	„ 9, Howard Street, Plank Lane
Sept.	„ 46, Talbot Road, Plank Lane
Oct.	„ 20, Talbot Road, Plank Lane
	Total—6 houses; 6 cases.

MONTH.	BICKERSHAW.
April	No. 96, Bolton House Road.
"	" 106, Bolton House Road
"	" 96, Bolton House Road
June	" 8, Barracks
July	" 6, Barracks
"	" 7, Barracks
"	" 345, Bickershaw Lane
"	" 13, Barracks, Bickershaw Lane
"	" 9, Bolton House Road
Aug.	" 2, Nine Acre
"	" 12, Barracks
"	" 33, Bolton House Road (2 cases)
"	" 65, Bolton House Road
Sept.	" 368, Bickershaw Lane
"	" 8, Atherton Street
Oct.	" Do. (2 cases)
"	" 393, Bickershaw lane
"	" 14, Barracks
"	" 51, Bolton House Road (3 cases)
Nov.	" 439, Bickershaw Lane
"	" 558, Bickershaw Lane
Dec.	" 515, Bickershaw Lane
Total—20 houses ; 26 cases.	

MONTH.	BAMFURLONG.
April	No. 6, Cross Street
May	" 17, Tetley Street
Oct.	" 52, Lilly Lane
Nov.	" 1, Brynn street
"	" 40, Lilly Lane
Dec.	" 9, Brynn Street
Total—6 houses ; 6 cases.	

SUMMARY :					
35	houses	with	single	cases	35
2	"	"	2	"	4
3	"	"	3	"	9
1	"	"	4	"	4
41					52

With a mortality of a fraction under 10 per cent.
of those attacked.

Both your Nuisance Inspector and myself are satisfied that indiscriminate visiting is at the bottom of its dissemination, some of it imported similarly. To this I shall again refer.

Typhoid Fever.—Notified 8 times ; was not fatal in any instance, which is peculiarly fortunate, all things considered. While I may say that it is practically endemic with us, yet we have never had an unusually heavy outbreak or big death rate.

Its incidence may be given fully as reported:—*February*, at 349, Bickershaw Lane, where surroundings are not good ; and a second at Shovelton Street, Plank Lane, with inferior surroundings. *May*, at 46, Plank Lane. *October*, at 2, John Street, off Warrington Road, and also at 29, Warrington Road. *November*, at 515, Bickershaw Lane (where scarlet fever occurred later in December). *December*, at 46, Lily Lane, and 311, Warrington Road.

Subjoined Ages :—1-5, one ; 5-15, one ; 15-25, one ; 25-60, five.

At your last meeting it will be remembered I mentioned that on your Nuisance Inspector and myself enquiring into a case we found the dijections being buried with lime chloride in the yard. This being against all principles of sanitation, I recommended your Board to procure some proper covered pails and a supply of mercuric per chloride germicide for use with same, and one of your workmen to see to its frequent attention and removal. Although I think this an exceptional instance, it leads me to remark that, as I then stated, the existence of infectious disease and its great importance from every point of view does not seem to be, even yet, impressed upon the public generally ; and further in this connection, your Inspector says it is not an infrequent thing for him to find on enquiry, which he does promptly after notification, that the patient has been ill some time, and adoption of measures such as he can take are practically futile. In this connection, and with regard to indiscriminate visiting referred to in scarlet fever, I propose at an early date submitting for your approval a concise summary of "duties and responsibilities, with memorandum of preventive measures to be taken on the occurrence of infectious sickness."

Erysipelas.—Of the 8 cases 7 occurred at Plank Lane, their incidence ranging from March to October, the Nuisance Inspector observing insanitary surroundings associated with a few of them.

Diphtheria and Membranous Croup (closely allied ailments) were recorded, the former at 144, Plank Lane, in May, and the latter in December at Windsor Street, Plank Lane.

Respiratory Diseases gave a somewhat high death rate, being 5.1 per 1000 against 2.6 in 1894. Half the deaths were pretty equally distributed in the three months of May, November, and December.

Influenza was somewhat prevalent in first quarter, and also *Whooping Cough* (7 out of the 8 deaths), while *Measles* occasioned a fatal case in Warrington Road in *January*, one, Ashton Street, *November*; one at Ingram's Fold, one at Clegg Street, Plank Lane; and two at one house in Willow Street, in *December*.

Diarrhoea did not seem to have been very prevalent, even in the warmer months—one fatality, at dentition period; but *Gastro Enteritis* was again pretty well to the front. The incidence of mortality as to time, however, would not suggest any period of an epidemic form, which it is apt to assume with sudden variations of temperature in the summer and autumn months. Children during the first year of life are very susceptible to attack—it is oftener than not in some degree concurrent with dentition, and few children escape a moderate attack during early life. Its causes are numerous, and it is easily provoked by the administration of ill-prepared or badly cooked foods, tainted, sour, or impure dietaries, particularly in hand-fed infants, and greatly so in those weakly constituted or in a state of general ill health.

I have made periodical as well as some special inspections during the course of the year, attended your meetings and reported upon the health of the district, mortality, matters requiring attention, &c., &c., briefly summarised:—To blocked end of sewer in Bickershaw Lane, sewage near Shovelton Street, Plank Lane. In Bamfurlong district found fair share of property clean and tidy in surroundings, but great tendency for erecting pigeon and poultry pens in yards, which interfered with free access and circulation of fresh air where most essentially wanted. Special enquiries as to cases of scarlatina at Bolton House Road, and inspected properties in this district, finding them much cleaner and tidier than usual. Specially inspected new property at Abram Brow and reported them insufficiently dry for habitation, and referred owner to Surveyor. Gave Nuisance Inspector instructions as to choked gullies, dilapidated spouting, Cunliffe Court, Plank Lane, and to see to regular scavenging of ashpits there. Wrote to owner of property at 1, Dootson Street, detailing work necessary to put same in proper habitable condition. Reported insanitary condition of some houses in Bickershaw Lane (Barton's), through house drains being not trapped or ventilated and buildings requiring structural repairs—roof dilapidated and inside walls and ceilings perished and wet; nuisance at Gibson's property, in Bickershaw Lane, from use of an improvised stable in a small yard and too near house door. Inspected Plank Lane district and found continued dry weather had been conducive to a minimum of common nuisances; but would have to visit Clegg Street again, there being no one in the house specially in question. There were serious insanitary conditions outside. Re-visited Yates's property. Met the owner—pointed out a series of defects, structurally and otherwise—who promised to carry requirements at once. Drew attention to property at top of Talbot Road, which seemed to be even getting worse and worse; to the advent of *Diarrhoea* with the hot weather, and pointing out causes and preventive measures; to nuisance at new property at bottom of Abram Brow (sewage running on to field—house drain not connected). Specially inspected new property at Abram Brow, referred to at last meeting, and found what was anticipated in presence of Nuisance Inspector and Chairman of Public Health Committee. This was the property I wrote to owner about in previous December respecting said drainage and condition of floor ground. Later found house unfit for occupation at next block. This is the block at present under your consideration on account of its general bad state. Brought forward the question of hospital accommodation, and Clerk was instructed to write the neighbouring townships thereon, viz.,—Ashton, Ince, Hindley, Leigh. Certified property at Abram Brow unfit for habitation, and the same were duly directed to be posted as such in accordance with the Act, until remedied. Instructed to examine two houses in Dootson Street, reported by Nuisance Inspector, and certified as to the insanitary condition of same, giving full details of requirements. Reported overcrowded condition of houses; but pointed out difficulty where all were members of the same family, but to be strict in abating such nuisance when not so. Attended special meeting of Council at Talbot Road, as to property reported insanitary, which meeting confirmed same, and in my next report I referred in following terms:—“Now with regard to the sanitary condition of Plank Lane. Some members of Council will recollect that for some years previous to 1886 I made very unfavourable reports, as did also your Inspector (Mr. Smith) upon the very unsatisfactory state of things in this locality. My observations were very emphatically confirmed by Dr. Parsons—in November, 1886—one of the Local Government Board Inspectors, who practically condemned then what I have, on several occasions since, specially and generally brought before your Authority as requiring most earnest attention. There can be no

two opinions, to my mind, respecting the insanitary surroundings of Yates's block, and I strongly advise that the two or three old insanitary cottages, also the cesspools, privies and midden ashpits lying between, should be entirely swept away, the drains carefully overhauled, the site of the old buildings well cleansed, sweetened, filled up and levelled with clean dry cinders, and the yards also attended to. New ashpits and closets of approved modern type should be erected. The back-to-back cottage should be altered and made into one decent tenement uniform with the adjoining ones." Although at Ackers Whitley's property repairs, structural, and attention to gullies and drains was being given, there was a serious condition of the interiors. Party walls, ceilings, casements of windows and doors, and outer walls fissured and cracked to a variable extent *throughout* the row. Three in particular were bad and almost dangerous—this the result of mining operations—and I pointed out how easily infectious disease could spread. As instructed, I wrote to the firm detailing these points and illustrated the dangers attendant thereon. I also wrote Mr. Hodgeon as to the further work essential for putting his new property at Abram Brow into proper sanitary condition. Made a further report on the old cottages here, detailing their condition and advising that they be dealt with under the Health of the Working Classes Act. Referred to the, as yet, unfinished state of house in Dootson Street, and to a bad case of overcrowding in Warrington Road. Also to the importance of attention to condition of intended new streets, back passages, and approaches to property.

It is with no small amount of satisfaction, as one interested in the sanitary improvement of a district with which I have been connected for so many years, that I can refer to a continued and increased activity on the part of your Authority during the past year in its desire to secure those improvements. Sanitary progress is comparatively slow, especially in measures of magnitude and great expense it is unavoidably so. Abram labouring under many disadvantages which other areas do not as regards its topography, gives additional trouble, anxiety and delay in seeking to secure permanent benefit. An efficient system of drainage and sewage disposal is indispensable after your acquirement of a good and constant water supply. During the past year your very comprehensive scheme referred to in my last annual report has engaged your earnest and unflagging attention.

Associated with visits of inspection to various sewage works your attention has been none the less and similarly directed to insanitary areas and properties which have been brought before your notice by the Nuisance Inspector and myself, to nuisances, and other matters allied with matters pertaining to public health. The cowsheds and dairies have engrossed your close attention,—and your Inspector made a detailed report of the condition of the thirty-eight sheds in the district—from which it appeared some fifteen or sixteen required alterations, and sanitary steps in regard to drainage, ventilation, lighting, &c. Resolution was passed for notices to be given to respective parties interested to secure conditions necessary to comply with "Council's regulations" of same. The Inspector issued further notices in ten instances in October and other fifteen in November, so that these important places are having a full share of observation. The Canal Boats, too, passing through Abram have been duly inspected and reported upon; from which it appears out of 116 only two infringed the regulations (one being remedied). Further, I may add, has attention been given by your Authority to the flooding of Plank Lane, in a fair way now for completion of works to prevent future mischief—the sewerage of Evans' property near Platts—to quality of water supply which is reported very satisfactory, and to the laying out of Talbot Road—which when finished should be highly satisfactory and much appreciated—and to various other minor but none less important pieces of work.

The following forms a brief summary of Nuisance Inspector's items during the year:—

Stopped gullies, stopped drains, &c.—30—of which a large proportion were at Plank Lane; delapidated closets, ashpits, &c.—34; filthy houses—13; keeping pigeons and poultry—9; houses without drain or gully—2; houses not connected with drains—2; untrapped drains—5; common nuisances—3; total—98.

With one or two exceptions, but in course of attention or waiting result of notices, all have been on the average promptly attended to—the action of the Nuisance Inspector having been very energetic.

I must conclude by once again referring your Council to matters which must not be lost sight of in the future:—

Insanitary Ashpits and Midden Steads.—These of course are largely in relation to the older properties throughout the district—following up the work of last year in regard to those bad ones at Plank Lane I see a possibility of an annual reduction, and I hope ere long they will be a thing of the past. The lines of re-construction on modern principles are contained in by-laws, and have been specially referred to owners by your Surveyor.

Surface of yards, passages, back streets, and also intended new ones; as frequently mentioned, it is exceedingly desirable that dryness of surfaces should be secured. The habits of the people, too, would frequently suggest a change for an altered condition of things. It is not at all uncommon to find fœcal matter studded up and down which becomes in time superficially incorporated with the ground. Section 23 of the Public Health Amendment Act, 1890, gives you full power to deal with these, and for the scavenging of streets and common areas. Wet, sloppy, muddy approaches and surroundings so common in wet seasons are a source of chest and throat affections, neuralgia, rheumatism, and the like.

Back-to-Back Houses.—These few are going to receive our best attention at a very near date—and justly so.

The scavenging which is contracted for in the several districts has on the whole been fairly good, the refuse being disposed of by these people on the land. We have no refuse tips in the district.

Isolation for Infectious Cases.—Unfortunately no accommodation could be arranged for with any of the four adjacent townships, and in the current year we must put our heads together, and carefully go over the reasons for making such provision, giving due attention to the official memorandum of the Local Government Board by Dr. Thorne, and linked with it is the indispensable article—a disinfecting apparatus.

There has been no occasion during the year to take any steps under the several other Acts in relation to Public Health, but the Factories and Workshops Act is now allied to the Sanitary Authorities in its sanitary aspects, and is to be worked by the Inspectors in touch with the M.O.H.

I beg to remain, Sir and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

NATHAN HANNAH,

Fell. Inc. Soc. of M.O.H.